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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 002072

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/08/2019

TAGS: PREL MOFS MASS MARR EWWT EG

SUBJECT: NAVCENT DISCUSSES SUEZ CANAL TRANSIT PROCEDURES

WITH MOD

Classified By: Ambassador Margaret Scobey per 1.4 (b) and (d).

- §1. (C) Key Points -- During a September 29 meeting, NAVCENT Deputy Commander Rear Admiral Cropper and Assistant Minister of Defense Major General Al-Assar commended U.S.-Egypt cooperation following the Global Patriot incident. Al-Assar asserted that U.S. Naval vessels do not have the right to fire weapons while being escorted by the Egyptian Navy, so the stand was that they must rely on self-defense if necessary. Rear Admiral Cropper expressed "deep regret" for the loss of life during the Global Patriot incident. He thanked Egypt for its efforts to implement robust force protection measures for all U.S. naval ships, including those transiting the Suez Canal. While cooperation was key, Rear Admiral Cropper clearly stated that ship commanders were obligated to exercise self-defense if necessary. Following a U.S. presentation on existing Suez Canal transit procedures, al-Assar said the meeting had been "useful and beneficial" and cleared this message. Scobey